10/17/71

Dear Bud,

Having gotten to the second page of Sprague's October piece in Computers, I am impelled to write you again about the repeated breaking of your word and the repeated misuse of material that is mine. No matter how many roads the well-intentioned pave to Hell, they remain roads to Hell; and nomatter how sincere the unknowingk may be, this kind of stuff remains the height of irresponsibility.

Now to refresh your recollection, it is two years since I first protested your not keeping the conditions of my willingness to cooperate with you on a personal basis while refusing to associate with the Committee. It was that anything I gave you would be kept in strictest confidence and segregated. When youmere here and copied what you wanted, it was on the same basis. I was explicit in specifying why, one of those ~~of~~ whose judgments I had deepest doubts is Dick and he is a persistent offender. He, of course, thinks he is rendering great pub,ic service.

The repeated use of what it took so much work to find and get about the executive sessions is particularly galling. No matter how you seek to dignify it, morally, if not legally, it is the equivalent of reaching into my pocket and helping yourself. I told you of that work in confidence, I showed it to you in confidence, and I could not have been more explicit in telling you that I required your advance agreement you would not even tell anyone about it. My cartons may be of poor quality, but I am perfectly capable of sending what I want to whomever I want. I didn't want this broadcast because it was then far from the end of an investigation. You offered to check with Ward&Paul, I agree only if you would agree that whatever you developed would be for me and remain in confidence, and you did agree. The next thing I know you were broadcasting this- what I got, not the Ward & Paul product, which merely duplicates some of it and adds nothing new - to the wildest of us. You apologized, gave the slide you had made of my material back to me, and said it wouldn't happen again. But here is Sprague misusing it again.

You did the same thing with Atlanta, where I asked you no more than if you would in confidence use your sources there to get the newspaper morgue contents. You agreed. The next thing you did was blow the whole damned thing that had taken so very much more work to develop than you can begin to imagine. What did you expect, that the subject of interest would be looking for a father-confessor and find him in an uninformed flatfoot who hadn't the remotest idea what to ask or look for? But the point here is again violation of confidence and trust, again acting as though you personally or through your committee own everything, and the result was destructive.

If I have no doubt about your intentions, there is no question about the result. Thus my use of the figure about paving roads to hell. Why you apply such radically different standards on this subject I can't begin to guess, but I am certain that in all other areas of your life you are responsible and do behave as decent people should.

In any event, at the time of Sprague's first public display of what is not better than mental illness on this subject in Computers, I asked that you return everything of mine and send a letter to all your members saying they were not to use anything from the files without checking to see if it is the property of your committee. You agree. To the best of my knowledge you have sent no such letter. I saw a draft jim did prepare, it was in certain respects inadequate, you agreed to change it, and I haven't heard a word since. Nor have I seen a copy of my snobletter sent out. I have repeatedly reminded him that all of my material was to be returned, with no copies kept. He is not a free agent. I now must ask for this again, this repeated, sick, ignorant misuse of any assassinationmaterial leaving me no alternative. I do hope you will see to it that it is now done promptly. This includes everything of whatever origin, including Garrison, whose worst faults I regret you emulate, except what you require for the appeal. I mean by this all my other Archives correspondence, too, for I can now take no chances. It is more than apparent that there is no capacity for

learning, not from the most egregious error or the worst possible judgment.

There is one part of this rubbish I have suspended reading to write you that Sprague was told. When I got the confession that he was being used, I promptly showed it to him, as he will, I am certain, confirm to you. And if you don't want to believe it, I will show it to you and its consequences. Sprague's sick reactions are completely predictable and unfortunately lend themselves to such use. What he would do was as easy to expect as tomorrow's sunrise. And it is exactly what he did, only with each retelling it gets embellished. No, I went into this with him quite pointedly at your party. That night he thanked me because he said he didn't want to do anything irresponsible. But soon he got unhappy and started changing it all around, first in his own mind and then to others. I regret there is nothing I can do about Dick. He is as fine a guy as one would want to know until there is this word assassination, and then he becomes a sway.

All of this is quite tragic, the more so because it is so unnecessary. If there is little I can do about it, I do, very much regret it entirely aside from its considerable personal cost to me (and you were witness to part of one of the consequences in N.O., as you ought never, ever forget, where two of those response were two of your people, as you persist in not remembering). It is lamentable that such fine people can behave so reprehensibly, wearing, as they think, a halo all the time. But its cost to me is and has been great, and that also I resent, as much as I would the robbing of my home. In a way more, because it involves other moral and ethical questions.

We cannot survive such conduct. The fact is, we do not deserve to. So if there is no way of keeping Sprague and others from solidifying their ill nesses in type, I must insist that in henceforth never again include any of my material, the product of my work.

You have by now come to realize that what I told you on the organization of your committee is right and the concept you then had was an impossibility. I have heard you give this formulation quite precisely only recently. Can you not learn that all the drivvel printed in such things as Computers can't be of any help and has almost without exception been hurtful? Can you not learn that all of this kind of nonsense that can't stand the analysis of those not expert -and my files are full enough of representations of this - and that each time such trash appears the chances of getting attention for anything of meaning is by that much reduced?

Of of my purposes, as I expect you not to believe, is to save you from yourself. At some point the real bad is going to look back on all of this and not be able to face it. I have not said many things I could that are personal, for I don't want this to be on that level, but I am aware of them if I have been silent, and there are too many that are utterly immoral, that are out-of-character dishonest, that are the kind of thing you would not in any other area even conceive of doing.

But, believe me, if you had the slightest idea of what the people who really know this field, not those who dream it and think they have instant knowledge by having rubbed the 26 are saying behind you back, you'd never stop being ashamed. I would like you not to become regarded as the inheritor of all of Garrison'd faults and mistakes, not to at some point look back and ask yourself what you have done, but I fear you simply will not stop confusing intentions for performance, dreams for reality. And I am as sorry for you as I am about the consequences. It hurts the work, doesn't in any way help it.

In any event, I repeat my request of so long ago. I do want the return of all of my work and material and I do want the sick ones warned not to use it again. Not even to quote their earlier uses. Two yeaars is too great a delay.

I don't think you will understand how sorry I am to have to write you so pointedly.

Sincerely,
Harold Weisberg